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TOP STORY

Play ball!

Tri-Village Little League will start its season July 6, joining youth sports across the Capital District

By **MICHAEL HALLISEY**

halliseym@spotlightnews.com

GLENMONT — Play ball!

Ballplayers and fans will soon hear the umpire say those words at Magee Park. Gov. Andrew Cuomo lifted virus-related restrictions that prevented youth sports from congregating on local ballfields. The governor's office gave the OK on Monday, June 15 to allow youth sports to start.

Tri-Village Little League will be among the scores of organizations to begin playing ball on Monday, July 6.

Continues on page 6



Magee Park has new signage and ground markers to remind spectators to practice safe social distancing while watching their kids play ball this summer.

Michael Hallisey / Spotlight News

ARTS



Who will turn on the lights?

Interviews to determine who manages Cohoes Music Hall start soon.

Story on Page B1

NEWS



Budgets pass

Local residents passed their respective school budgets in surprising turnout.

Story on Page 3



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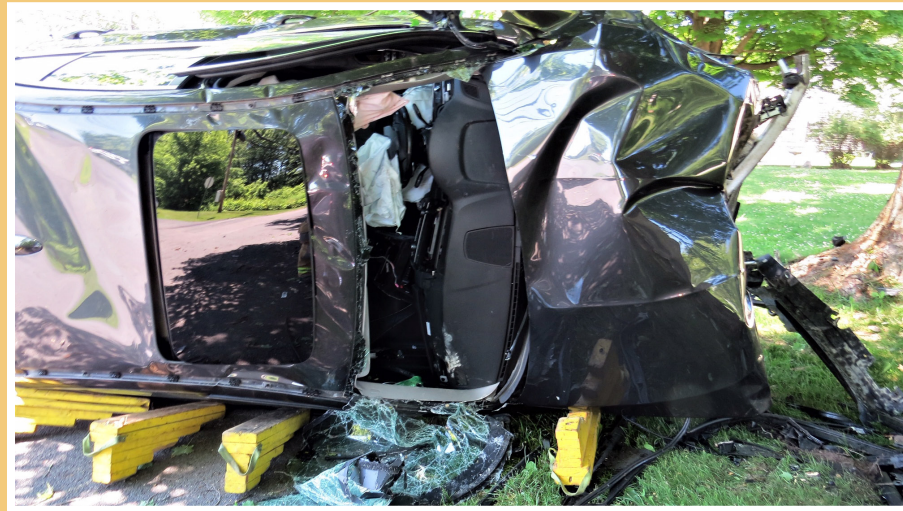
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■ POLICE, COURT and EMERGENCY CALLS



Thomas Heffernan, Sr.

Afternoon crash

SELKIRK — A Troy motorist will appear before a Bethlehem Court judge to answer to allegations of speeding and erratic driving after the car he was operating crashed on Wednesday morning, June 17.

Joshua A. Perez, 33, of Troy, was treated at Albany Medical Center for minor injuries after the car he was operating rolled over on Lasher Road, off of Bridge Street in Selkirk. Bethlehem police, Selkirk Fire, Delmar-Bethlehem EMS and Albany County Paramedics responded to the scene of the one-car accident at approximately 11:30 a.m. A motorist who had called authorities to report the incident had also disclosed that Perez was driving erratically on Bridge Street just prior to the accident.

A subsequent crash investigation determined that Perez was allegedly driving at excessive speed. He was later cited for speed not reasonable or prudent and is scheduled to appear in Bethlehem Court in August.

— Michael Hallisey

Bear about town

GLENMONT — There have been reports of black bears in residential neighborhoods over the past several weeks, including one within Albany's city limits.

Neighbors communicating over the Nextdoor social media app shared their stories of a bear roaming around the Kenholm Gardens neighborhood of Elsmere starting on Saturday, May 30. Since then, more reports followed around Dowerskill Village off Wemple Road and Elm Avenue South in Selkirk. An Albany resident recorded a bear walking down Harris Avenue, just blocks away from Russell Sage College, in the city's Helderberg neighborhood.

No significant damage was reported. One residents reported being startled when she said a premature bear paid a visit while she was in her backyard. She was unharmed. The bear appeared more interested in

playing with the family dog.

Bear encounters are not uncommon this time of year. A similar situation occurred around Hamagreal Elementary two years ago, when a bear reportedly damaged a Delmar family's bird feeders.

Birdfeeders containing fruit to attract songbirds have been known to also attract bears. More information about bears can be found on the DEC website.

Break-ins

ELSMERE — Bethlehem police is investigating the overnight burglary of a Euclid Avenue home on Tuesday, June 16.

According to Bethlehem police, a burglary took place between Tuesday night and early Wednesday morning while the occupants of the home were sleeping. Police said some items were stolen from the home. A window

screen from a neighboring home was removed that same night, but police said no one entered the house.

Bethlehem police said they have received leads and will continue to investigate.

Fireworks

With the July 4th holiday quickly approaching, there have been many questions on legal and illegal fireworks. The Bethlehem Police Department would like to clarify what fireworks are legal, and which are not. Due to recent changes by the legislature the New York State Penal Law now allows for the sale and use of a specific category of consumer fireworks known as Sparkling Devices.

Sparkling Devices are ground based or handheld devices that produce a shower of colored sparks and or a colored flame, audible crackling or whistling noise and smoke. The law limits the type, size and construction of Sparkling Devices and requires that these devices must be handheld or mounted on a base or spike and be limited in sizes that range from 1 to 500 grams of pyrotechnic composition.

What kind of fireworks are legal?

- Sparkling fountains (cylindrical and cone)
- Sparklers on wooden sticks, but not metal
- Smoking devices
- Snakes
- Confetti-filled party poppers
- Paper-wrapped snappers

What kind of fireworks are not legal?

- Bottle rockets and other fireworks that fly, such as-
- Firecrackers
- Bottle rockets
- Roman candles
- Spinners
- Other aerial devices

Further details on fireworks can be found at the following link: <http://www.dhses.ny.gov/ofpc/news/sparklingdevices.cfm>

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EDUCATION

Budgets have passed, seniors will walk

Have pandemic, will vote

By MICHAEL HALLISEY
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

DELMAR — Despite a pandemic and shutdowns across the state, more Bethlehem Central voters turned out to approve next year's academic budget than last year.

District voters approved a \$103.5 million budget for the 2020-21 school year by a margin of 78 percent in favor to 22 percent opposed.

"The one thing we have been able to count on in this time of uncertainty has been the support of a community that values education and truly cares for its schools," said Superintendent Jody Monroe. "This budget will provide us with the necessary tools to meet the many challenges of delivering quality education against the backdrop of the pandemic."

The district counted nearly 5,000 ballots Tuesday evening, June 16. Of the 4,899 votes, 3,832 approved next year's budget. Residents also voted in favor of a \$1.2 million bus purchase proposition and decided upon three school board members.

Holly Dellenbaugh, Meredith Moriarty and Christine Beck — all incumbents — each return to the school board for another three-year term. Beck, who received the least amount of votes out of the three, received 15 percent more votes than her closest competitor Ryan Richman.

Dellenbaugh, Moriarty and Beck's new terms will start as of July 1.

Virus-related shutdowns prevented residents from using the voting booths in 2020. Instead, the district brought the vote home to them by means of a mail-in ballot. As a result, nearly twice as many residents voted this year.

Last year, 2,528 residents voted to approve the district's proposed budget. The mail-in ballots resulted in a 93.8 percent increase in voter response.

"We have a long road ahead of us but it helps us to know that the community recognizes the needs of students as we prepare for the 2020-21 school year," Monroe said.

RCS voters OK budget 2:1

RAVENA — Ravenna-Coeymans-Selkirk Central School District residents approved a \$48.6 million budget for the next school year.

The 2020-21 school budget called for an increase of more than \$615,000 from the previous budget. That 1.28 percent increase did not appear to sway district voters who approved the budget by a 1,720 to 809 vote, a 2-to-1 margin.

Much of the proposed spending increase will meet contractual obligations and fulfill programs planned for the upcoming school year.

Voters also approved a bus purchase proposition (1,570 to 952) and a proposition to support the public library (1,740 to 790).

Three incumbents were re-elected to the school board. Tina Furst-Hotaling garnered the most votes with 2,001 votes, followed by William McFerran (1,964) and Peter Ross (1,952).

Vville: 74 percent said 'yes'

NEW SCOTLAND — Residents said yes to a larger budget, and yes to three new buses, in a vote Voorheesville Central School District witnessed a 74 percent approval rate.

Once ballots were counted on Tuesday, June 16, residents had passed the district's \$26 million budget by a vote of 1173 to 409. The 2020-21 budget reflects a 2.4 percent spending increase over the current year's budget and carries a 3 percent tax levy increase.

Residents also passed a bus purchase proposition that will allow the district to buy three 66-passenger school buses at a cost of \$236,000.

Patricia Putman and Timothy Kremer were voted on to the school board to each

Continues on page 5



It looks like Bethlehem senior Amy Burdick will have a graduation. Thomas Heffernan, Sr.

Local graduates will cross the stage in unique celebrations

By MICHAEL HALLISEY
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

Local schools will be celebrating their graduating students this weekend in a manner that has defined the last four months of their academic year.

Bethlehem is adopting a familiar practice since classrooms were closed back in March. Amongst plans for a graduation ceremony and a special night at a local drive in, it's throwing a parade.

A "reverse parade" is planned around the high school campus. Students will follow a procession that will allow them to see their alma mater for the last time as students on the day before graduation.

"Teachers from throughout the district have been invited to cheer on our graduates along the route. Student Fatheads, balloons and various decorations will line the route," the district said in a statement.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo laid out the guidelines earlier this month on how New York state schools could celebrate graduation commencements. The state gave the OK for schools to gather crowds of up to 150, so long as the celebration is outdoors and people remain socially distant.

"Dr. Wiles and I discussed the announcement and decided to make some changes to the June 27, Senior Drive-Through Stage Walk event," stated Guilderland High School Principal Michael Piscitelli in his announcement to district parents. "We have decided to modify the event so that students can experience some semblance of traditional graduation."

Guilderland seniors will cross the stage, with their families allowed to observe from a distance. With the state's new guidelines, the graduating class will be grouped into 45-minute windows by their respective last names and limited to 53.

Students will leave their parents in the family car as they take a seat. Despite the effort to maintain the semblance of normal, seniors will sit with their fellow students

Continues on page 4

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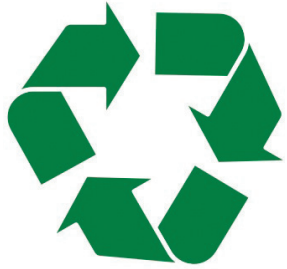
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Spotlight Newspapers

From page 3 ...

Local graduation plans

— six feet apart from each other and wearing masks. The district is prohibiting families from socializing on the spot as it moves on to the next group of seniors.

It will be a long day for district officials facilitating a staggered celebration that promises to extend nearly the length of a normal school day.

Bethlehem Central is running a similar ceremony for its students on Friday,

June 26. The district also announced that its graduation events will be livestreamed, followed by a night at Jericho Drive-In that includes speeches from students, administrators and more. The night will be capped by fireworks.

Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk and Voorheesville school districts have more wiggle room with graduating classes respectively smaller

than Bethlehem and Guilderland.

Voorheesville threw a senior parade through town earlier in the month. A touching video displayed on YouTube captured the event, along with a choir of elementary students signing the school's alma mater.

RCS had already arranged for a graduation movie to premiere at Jericho Drive-In when the governor's office opened up more options to area schools. So, they're inviting the families of its 118 graduating students to its expansive campus on

Saturday, June 27, at 9 a.m.

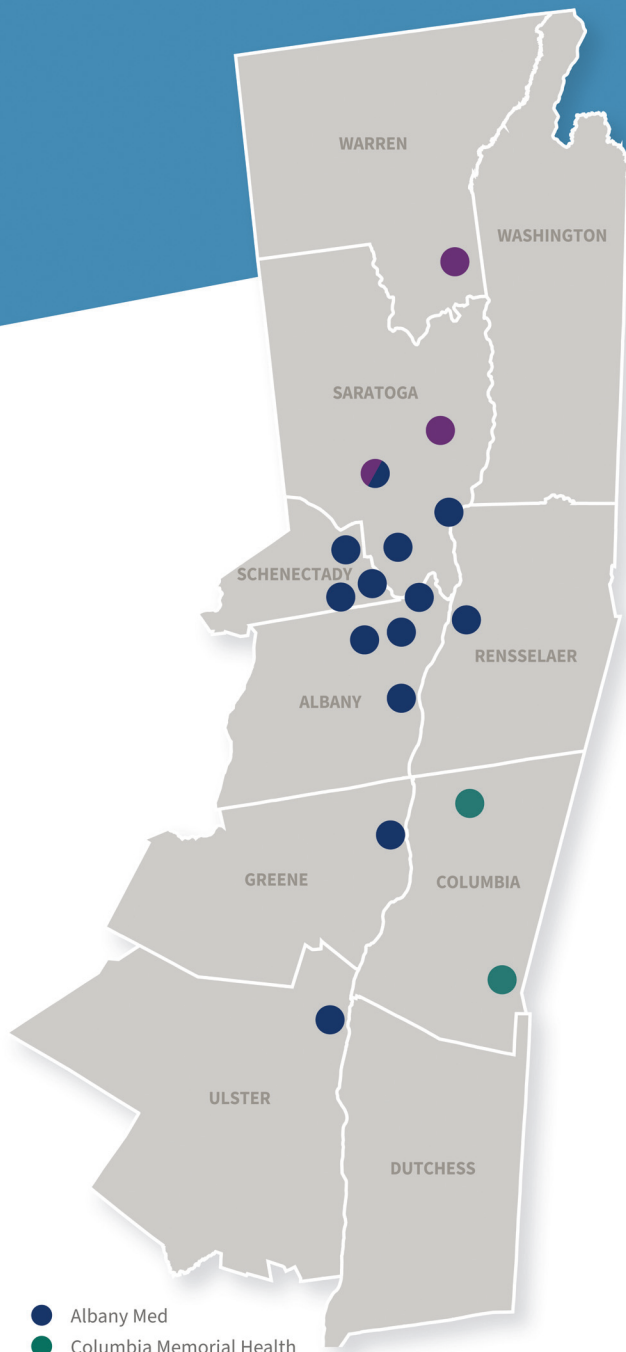
RCS seniors will cross the stage as their families drive by in a synchronized procession Saturday morning. The movie will show at the drive-in the following evening at 9 p.m.

"I wanted to sincerely thank the members of our RCS community for banning together and for showing kindness and patience as we adapted to this new world," RCS Superintendent Brian Bailey shared in a statement to district families. "We accomplished some pretty impressive things during

this difficult time while parents were sick or well, out of work or working from home, lacking childcare and spending all of their time caring for children, and acting as chef, housekeeper, nurse, teacher and counselor. Even if you don't feel like you accomplished all of these tasks like an expert, you are amazing."

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EDUCATION

Residents share their concerns

District residents respond back to survey asking them what issues they are most concerned with as schools prepare plans to reopen next year

By MICHAEL HALLISEY
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

DELMAR — As Bethlehem Central prepares its plans to reopen schools next fall, it wants to listen to local families first.

Bethlehem Central reached out to district families through a survey earlier this year. In return, the district collected approximately 260 responses, from which the administration prepared a report that it released to district families on Monday, June 15.

Families expressed various concerns. More than a dozen issues were shared following four months of their students conducting studies from outside the classroom. Students from kindergarten to 12th grade commonly

learned lessons from laptops at home, sometimes working side-by-side with a parent also working remotely from outside the office. That challenging scenario, in addition to obvious concerns about health, dominated responders' concerns.

Physical health of students and staff (15.1 percent) topped the list of concerns, according to the district. The ability to social distance in school (14), lack of social learning/interaction (13.4), students not getting as much out of an online-only education (11), making all students wear masks (10.8) and mental health of students and staff (9.4) were listed by nearly two-thirds of responders.

"Parents expressed a strong desire for things to

return to normal this fall," the district stated within the conclusions section of the report. Omitted from the list were parents who expressed a return to normal. Families asking to fully reopen next school year outnumbered those who listed concerns over physical help 48 to 45. "However, there were more responses combined for alternate education proposals," the district said.

An example of alternate education proposals was defined by the district as a staggered schedule that involved students to juggle a schedule involving in-person class days with online-only days. Fifty two respondents expressed interest in this option.

"Our number one concern with any reopening plan is how we keep our



Bethlehem bus driver Donna Asprion prepares teachers who volunteered last week to hand deliver caps and gowns to graduating seniors. Thomas Heffernan, Sr.

students and staff safe," said district superintendent Jody Monroe. "We currently have teams of people reviewing the necessary training, personal protective equipment and health and safety requirements that we will need to have in place with a return to the classroom."

Some parents painted a "police state" defined

by too many regulations. Some of those parents asked the district for more information on how they could keep their kids home.

Monroe said the district does not know what to expect this fall, though the state requires that it receives the district's plan to reopen by next month.

"Until it is determined that return to school is

approved for September, we will continue to coordinate plans for every scenario that can ensure continuity of instruction for students in a safe environment," said Monroe. "Like you, we would like to see our students return to the same warm, welcoming schools they left behind. And they will."

From page 3 ... School vote results

serve a four-year term. Argi O'Leary obtained the third seat left vacant by a previous resignation. O'Leary will serve out the remaining two years of that term.

Patience

GUILDERLAND — District officials hand counted more than 7,500 ballots last week, 66 percent

of which resulted in a passed budget for 2020-21. "Over 7,500 ballots were received, representing triple the number of votes we have had in years past," said Superintendent Marie Wiles.

District residents passed the \$103 million budget by a 4,906 to 2,524 vote. This budget represents an increase in spending of

\$925,320 or 0.91 percent over the current year and will result in a 2.25 percent tax levy increase.

Voters also approved a \$983,300 proposition to purchase four 66-passenger buses, three 66-passenger buses with chains, and one 60-passenger bus with wheelchair stations and air conditioning, with 4,681 to 2,729 vote.

Rebecca Butterfield, Judy Slack and Benjamin Goes were each voted into three-terms on the school board. Blanca Gonzalez-

Parker and Luciano Alonzi were voted onto the board, each will continue the one year left of the three-year term left vacant.

"Thank you to our community for your unprecedented participation in the voting process," said Wiles. "We appreciate your overwhelming support of our budget and bus propositions. We will continue to work hard to support our students and provide the quality education they deserve."

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From page 1 ... Play ball

The move from Albany seemingly saves youth sports from the clutches of a coronavirus pandemic. There will, however, be reminders of the strange, new world we now live in.

"I've been telling everyone this is not going to be a normal year at Magee," said Paul Matrose, player agent and spokesperson for Tri-Village Little League, "but we are going to do our best to get the kids out there and play baseball."

League volunteers already had Magee Park dressed for a new season. The grass was mowed, the infield dirt was freshly raked, but the addition of public service signs and hand-painted circles on the grown lent indication that social distancing will be enforced to keep COVID-19 spreading at the park.

Matrose said the league has been working towards this day for nearly two months. League officials have attended regular meetings online and have kept close observation on how other states have facilitated their seasons.

"Our safety agent Lou Faiola, along with our vice president Michael O'Connell, really led the

charge and have done an outstanding job," said Matrose. "We really wanted to give our 12-year olds a chance to play their last year in Little League. If we could do it safely, and there was community support, we felt it was our duty to make it happen."

The league approached parents to ask how comfortable they would be to a new season with strict safety guidelines. Parents of younger children felt less inclined to have their kid play ball this year, Matrose said, and they received refunds. Parents of older children, however, felt more comfortable. Within the majors level — the league's oldest age bracket — Matrose said more than 90 percent of families decided to return.

"I think it's important to note that we felt it was imperative that we had community support," Matrose said. "In fact, over the past week, we've had several additional registrations."

There will be a season for players in the majors, intermediate and younger farm team levels at Magee Park this year. The league had already decided to cancel the season for t-ball teams as managing safety

measures with the younger players would be too difficult.

Crowds will be limited to two spectators for each player. Everyone in the stands will be required to wear face coverings at all times, whether they can maintain social distancing or not. Matrose said the league felt it was important that the kids in the league see that visual of parents practicing safe social behavior. In addition to the social distancing measures undertaken by spectators, scheduled games will be staggered to prevent games from playing on neighboring fields simultaneously.

Parents will also be held responsible for conducting health assessments on their ballplayers before each game. An online module was developed to allow parents to submit their assessments online. If no assessment is received, their child does not play.

"It feels great. We've been working hard the last two months trying to put a plan in place to safely play if we were given the green light," said Matrose. "It's a chance to get them back to semi-normalcy in a safe manner. We're very excited to get the kids back together and have some fun."



Bethlehem Softball League announces scholarship winners

The Bethlehem Softball League has announced the winners of its annual college scholarship awards to four area high school seniors.

The 2020 winners are: Haley Nash, Emily Forand and Aurora Lagace of Delmar and Megan Kirk of Clarksville.

The Bethlehem Softball League offers two or more scholarships of up to \$500 each annually to current high school seniors who plan to

attend college and have played with the Bethlehem Softball League for at least five years.

Applicants are also required to submit an essay describing their softball experience and explain how that experience impacted their activities outside of softball.

The scholarships are presented in honor of John Coulon, who devoted so much time and effort to help the Bethlehem Softball League.

LIBRARIES

Summer reading at Bethlehem library starts ... now

This summer is shaping up to be a very different one from what we imagined when we first started making plans for our Summer Reading Challenge with the 2020 Imagine Your Story theme. While the concerts, performances, lock-ins and big community gatherings will not be a part of the Summer Reading experience this year, we have been busy coming up with fun ways for to participate online.

Are you up for the



challenge? We are inviting you and your family to explore the stories that inspire and encourage us – and earn prizes while you're at it! You can sign up online (bethlehempubliclibrary.org/summer-reading-2020) and get started checking off your reading milestones right away.

Here's how it works:

For pre-K, kids and teens: For every four

activities you complete, you can select a book of your choice. When you have completed four activities, fill out the online prize form to indicate your selection.

For adults: For every activity you complete, you'll earn 100 points. Redeem 400 earned points for a raffle ticket and a chance to win one of five prize bags! The raffle will take place and winners notified when the summer reading program concludes in September.

Visit bethlehempublic

library.org/summer-reading-2020 for more information about Summer Reading.

Let's get Summer Reading started!

We are kicking off our 2020 Summer Reading Challenge with a virtual performance by the Traveling Lantern Theater Company available through June 28. The show, "Legends and Myths from Mount Olympus," highlights this year's Summer Reading theme:

Imagine Your Story.

From their protected perch on Mount Olympus, the gods of ancient Greece spin their magic and subterfuge into fantastic landscapes while they conjure cunning exploits for the humans they choose to meddle with far below. Children learn to heed warnings by watching Icarus fly too close to the sun, to value eternal love as Ceix and Alcione pledge to stay together for all time, and to be brave and courageous as they watch Perseus battle Medusa and

ultimately turn her into stone.

Email mary@bethpl.org for a link and the password to access the show.

Books to People is back

Our Books to People free delivery service has resumed. To request the Books to People delivery service, call the library at (518) 439-9314.

— Kristen Roberts

Voters approved Guilderland library budget

Voters approved our \$3.995 million budget levy for 2020-21 with a 64 percent approval rate. We greatly appreciate the enduring support of the community we serve. Throughout the pandemic shutdown, we have continually strived to reinvent ourselves to meet patrons' needs virtually in various ways. Now, as we work in two staggered staff teams to gradually reintroduce services, we are vigilant on health and safety concerns, and aim to proceed with utmost



caution for the well-being of staff and patrons alike. Our resolve remains steadfast: we're here for you as we move forward with intention. Thank you for recognizing the intrinsic value of YOUR library!

Out of five candidates seeking one of three open Board of Trustees seats, the three elected are: Marcia Alazraki, Mark Keeling (incumbent), and

Richard Rubin. We extend our congratulations to these individuals, and our sincere appreciation to Herb Hennings and Phil Metzger for their dedicated service to the Library Board. We are grateful for the diligent oversight and contributions of all who volunteer their time and energy as GPL Board members.

Building Project Update

Last year, the Library received about 4,200 votes due to the proposed building project, which was approved. Despite the building remaining closed to the public since mid-March due to the pandemic, our renewal plans are progressing on time and on budget.

The Library is on target to go to bid in October. Once construction begins, we will remain open through most of the

renovations. The first phase will be an addition on the east end of the building to better accommodate crowded children's programs and services. Subject to weather and industry factors, the project is slated for completion in the summer of 2022.

Reopening Plans

Our contactless curbside service by appointment to process materials we've been holding since mid-March ("holds") is underway. Anyone who requested items prior to

the pandemic shutdown has been notified to set up their appointment for pick up. Our hours of operations for these front entrance transactions are Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and Tuesday and Thursday, 3 to 7 p.m. Two staggered teams of staff are operating in our building - which remains closed to the public - with stringent procedures enacted to help ensure everyone's safety.

— Luanne Nicholson

LEGALS	LEGALS	LEGALS	LEGALS
<p>NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION</p> <p>TranBonnans Brooklyn, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 05/15/20. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 2003 East 21st Street, Brooklyn, NY 11229. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-246104</p>	<p>NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION</p> <p>VHG LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 05/06/20. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 33 Vestry Street, Unit 4, New York, NY 10013. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-245737</p> <p>NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION</p> <p>VOILA DINING LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 06/08/20. Latest date to dissolve: 12/31/2120. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, c/o Emil Stefkov, 108 Seventh Avenue South, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10014. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-247377</p>	<p>NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION</p> <p>VULGARIS MC LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 06/09/20. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, ATTN: John Mazzola, 35 Gann Road, East Hampton, NY 11937. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-248147</p> <p>NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION</p> <p>WILLA HOLDINGS LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 06/08/20. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 960 Park Avenue, 12W, New York, NY 10028. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-247381</p>	<p>NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION</p> <p>YARDIE BISTRO LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 06/03/20. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 46 Pennsylvania Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 11575. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-247104</p> <p>NOTICE OF LLC FORMATION</p> <p>ZACH & VICKY LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 06/01/20. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 150 Broadway, Suite 1703, New York, NY 10038. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. D-246921</p>

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Spotlight on Opinion

www.spotlightnews.com PAGE 10

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POINT OF VIEW



The Spotlight welcomes letters of local and regional interest. Letters are subject to editing and are limited to 500 words.

All letters must include the writer's name, address and phone number. The Spotlight reserves the right to limit the number of letters published from a single author.

Submissions can be emailed to news@spotlightnews.com. The deadline for all letters is noon Friday prior to publication.

The Spotlight also welcomes longer opinion pieces for the Point of View section.

For information on submitting a Point of View, email news@spotlightnews.com or call (518) 439-4949.

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Spotlight Newspapers
Community news
Starts here

Local mom favors tobacco law

Jennifer J. Corcoran Conway is a proud mom of a very special boy, a Bethlehem resident and is Chair-elect at American Heart Association. She writes in favor of local legislation requiring retail tobacco and vape licensure.

I am writing as the incoming Chair of the Board of our local American Heart Association, a resident of the Town of Bethlehem, and, most importantly, as a mom of an eight-year-old boy who lives with a congenital heart defect. In all of those capacities, I am absolutely in favor of the proposed local law that would require licensure of retailers selling tobacco and/or vapor products and

restrict location of those retailers to no less than 1,000 feet from a school. It would also "cap and winnow" the number of licenses with a floor of seven retailers.

As an initial matter, the proposed local law is no different than existing state laws requiring licensure of restaurants and businesses selling and serving alcohol in an effort to prevent under-age drinking and the over-service of customers. Strong retail licensure requirements are an effective policy tool to limit youth initiation of tobacco products, as well as to prevent access and continued usage of these products. Retailer licensing provides governments with

an efficient enforcement mechanism to ensure that retailers comply with other applicable laws. If a retailer evades taxes, sells to minors or violates other tobacco/vapor control laws, the government can suspend or revoke the license in addition to enforcing the underlying violation.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death, and a significant risk factor for heart disease and stroke. The 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey stated that 14.8 percent of U.S. middle and high school e-cigarette users who are under 18 reported obtaining e-cigarettes in the past 30 days from a vape shop or other store that sells

e-cigarettes. Furthermore, there are numerous accounts of youth under 21 who were not refused sale of these products. The easy availability of these products in our communities likely contributes to the high amount of youth reporting that they obtain e-cigarette products from social sources like friends and classmates.

Personally, as the mom to a child living with a severe congenital heart defect, passing laws such as this is an absolute necessity. My son has had to fight for life since the day he was born, living every day with basically half of a functioning heart. If there is a way to prevent heart disease in children

who are born with healthy hearts, how can we not support measures like this, which are solely aimed at preventing children from accessing and using tobacco and e-cigarette products?

This is exactly the type of policy local governments need to pass. Unfortunately, despite all of the progress that has been made with regard to reducing tobacco use and nicotine addiction, we still need to do more. I implore the Town of Bethlehem to enact this legislation. If not for the greater good of all, then for my son and all of the other children in this town.

LIBRARIES

Virtual Live Family Concert by SteveSongs

Get ready to rock and "Imagine Your Story" with a virtual live concert at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 8, with SteveSongs from PBS Kids!

The performance will be special for the Voorheesville community and tailored to our community's children and families with active engagement. Scroll down at the library's homepage for information and video links



to get you inspired! The concert will be streamed live from the SteveSongs Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SteveSongs/>

TikTok Tricks

Up your video skills with Jester Jim, a

professional videographer on Wednesday, July 1 and Wednesday, July 15, from 11 to 11:30 a.m. on YouTube.

He'll be sharing some tips and tricks that you can use to shoot your own amazing videos this summer. Tune in for lesson one, work on your challenge video, then return on July 15 to get more pointers and share what you've done. No TikTok account necessary.

Students entering grades 7 and up should register to join this live, online class.

Virtual Book Discussions

The Fiction Book Discussion will meet via Go To Meeting at 7 p.m., Wednesday, July 8, to discuss "Death on the Nile" by Agatha Christie. The Nonfiction Book Discussion group will

meet virtually at 7 p.m., Monday, July 13, to discuss "A Primate's Memoir" by Robert Sapolsky. The Cookbook Discussion group will meet virtually at 6:30pm, Thursday, July 23, to discuss "Easy Mexican Food Favorites" by Jennifer Olvera. Call the Library for more information on how to receive a book.

— Lynn Kohler

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Publisher | John A. McIntyre Jr.

Managing Editor | Michael Hallisey
Online Editor | Jim Franco
Reporter | Diego Cagara

Advertising Representatives |
Susan O'Donnell,
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■ COMMUNITY

Bethlehem Public Library budget passes, two elected to board

DELMAR — Residents approved Bethlehem Public Library’s \$4.17 million budget levy for 2020-21 on Tuesday, June 16, with a 79 percent approval rate.

“Your widespread support means a lot to us as we face these difficult times together,” the library shared in a statement to residents following the results. “Looking ahead, we see the library playing a vital role in bolstering the resilience of this community as we all bounce back from the difficulties brought on by the coronavirus health crisis and subsequent stay-at-home order.”

Voters also elected newcomer Charmaine Wijeyesinghe to a five-year term on the board of trustees, and re-elected Lisa Scoons.

Board meetings, which typically take place on the second Monday of the month at 6 p.m., are streamed live on the library’s website and YouTube channel at this time.

For more information, visit bethlehempubliibrary.org.

Bethlehem Town Board to discuss opening pools this year

DELMAR — The Bethlehem Town Board will discuss whether or not to open the pools at Elm Avenue Park this summer.

The governor’s office recently lifted virus-related restrictions that had previously prohibited the pool from opening to the public.

Parks and Recreation Administrator Jason Gallo is

scheduled to conduct a presentation before the board when it next meets on Wednesday, June 25, at 6 p.m.

Stewart’s expanding Elm Avenue shop near Bethlehem Central High

DELMAR — Stewart’s Shops has submitted its intentions to expand its services to include gas pumps at the intersection of Elm and Delaware avenues.

The plan would involve demolishing the current storefront, along with the All State Insurance office building it recently obtained next door.

The corner lot once stood as a long-abandoned gas station before Stewart’s Shops built the current convenient store in 1997.



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PHASE ONE



PHASE TWO



PHASE THREE



The Capital Region continues to reopen and is now in Phase Three.

Please continue to support our local businesses as people start to get back on their feet.

Make sure to maintain social distancing and follow other public health guidelines to help prevent an increase in the spread of the coronavirus.

Phase One businesses included Construction; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Retail (limited to curbside or in-store pickup or drop off); Manufacturing; and Wholesale Trade.

Phase Two businesses included Offices; Real Estate; Essential and Phase II In-Store Retail; Vehicle Sales, Leases, and Rentals; Retail Rental, Repair, and Cleaning; Commercial Building Management; Hair Salons and Barbershops; and Outdoor and Take-Out/Delivery Food Services.

Phase Three businesses included Personal Care and Restaurants/Food Services.



Visit our Restart Resources page for info, guidelines & safety protocols that will help prepare you to reopen your business.

bethlehemchamber.com/restart-resources

sponsored by: Pursuit

Visit our Bethlehem Small Business Center for info on businesses that are open. This list is updated daily as we receive details.

bethlehemchamber.com/bethlehem-small-business-center

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Visit our resources page to learn more about the Phases and your reopening plan.

guilderlandchamber.com/business-resources/coronavirus-resources

This page is open to all businesses in Guilderland; contact Danielle Walsh, Executive Director at dwalsh@guilderlandchamber.com.

guilderlandchamber.com/guilderland-small-business-hub



Freedom Day

Juneteenth was celebrated this past weekend in Albany.

Page B19

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INSIDE



Won't open

Popular Delmar eatery opts to continue curbside service.

Page B4



Can't open

Troy places all-stop on grand opening of rebranded eatery.

Page B5



Armenian flavors

Friday means Armenian food in Watervliet this month.

Page B6



ARTS

Who will turn on the lights?

Interviews to determine who manages Cohoes Music Hall start soon

By **MICHAEL HALLISEY**
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

COHOES — It's Sunday evening and Cohoes Music Hall's marquee hangs dim across Remsen Street. Virus-related shutdowns have kept the historical hall quiet for more than three months, but there's been a constant buzz surrounding it since the city canceled the contract with the group managing the storied stage.

Continues on page B3



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▶ quote of the week

"I like all you guys individually, but when you get together you do stupid stuff."

Vic Christopher, Troy restaurateur speaking of city officials who closed his restaurant down

IT'S ELEMENTARY

Children take to coloring the words of the day.




eqoix / instagram



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<p>2017 FORD FUSION SE</p>  <p>LUXURY PKG, 1.5L ECO-BOOST, Automatic, Pwr Windows/Locks/Mirrors, Heated/Power Interior, SATT Radio, 34,414 Miles. \$16,995</p>	<p>2017 KIA SORENTO LX</p>  <p>V6, AWD, 4dr SUV, 3rd Row Seating, SATT Radio, Alloy Wheels, Pwr Windows/Locks/Mirrors, 74,422 Miles. \$18,995</p>

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Answers on Pg. B17

What's happening this week?

Check out our HOT SPOTS Calendar at:

thespot518.com/hotspots





From page B1 ... Who will turn on the lights?

A review committee is soon expected to interview a field of six candidates vying to manage the historic playhouse. The collection of candidates includes Just Imagine from Rensselaer, The Hall from Niskayuna, and Lopolito from the Lower Hudson Valley.

Guthrie/Bell Productions is among the groups applying for the management role. Its proprietor Greg Bell has been promoting music acts in the Capital District since 1992, and has brought several shows to Cohoes over the years.

“Just the fact that Guthrie/Bell Productions has a 1 in 6 chance of managing The Cohoes Music Hall is so exciting,” said Guthrie/Bell Productions spokesperson Kim Neaton. Their application is submitted in partnership with Creative Concerts. “We wouldn’t be doing this if it was just any venue, this isn’t just another business opportunity to us. Greg Bell and I have fallen in love with the venue over the past few years, and want to be a big part in helping downtown Cohoes continue its growth.”

The list also includes familiar names who’ve been intimately associated with

the Music Hall in recent years.

Park Playhouse and Music Hall Arts Alliance have each submitted separate applications after calling Remsen Street home over the past two years. Holly Brown, executive director of Music Hall Arts Alliance, helped orchestrate the playhouse’s move to Cohoes from its former home at The Palace Theatre, of which she managed before coming to the Spindle City.

Both entities had contracts with the city until the end of 2022, but those agreements were voided by the city in May after a suggestion from Mayor Bill Keeler. Keeler, who replaced Shawn Morse as mayor in January, said he wanted to restructure an agreement that didn’t cost the struggling city.

Keeler has said severing ties with the two companies was to save the city approximately \$200,000 this year. The former contract with Music Hall Arts Alliance alone called for the city to pay a management fee of \$90,000. In turn, the city would have received \$2.50 for each ticket sold. Last season, the City Hall received back \$38,000.

Brown said her

Music Hall Arts Alliance’s contract with Cohoes runs to July 31. Proposals will be reviewed and a new contract will be awarded on Aug. 1.

Michael Hallisey / The Spot 518

management company maintained the Music Hall off an annual budget of approximately \$450,000, 20 percent of which was from the city. The city agreed to those terms prior to Keeler taking office. She had previously expressed her disappointment over the city not affording her group a chance to work out a new agreement without terminating the contract. She worried that financial struggles associated with temporary shutdowns was prompting the city into the decision.

Theatres across New York closed their doors to the public in mid-March amid state-mandated novel coronavirus-related shutdowns. The shutdowns meant to mitigate the spread of the virus have caused a strain on the economy as it has limited public access to only businesses deemed essential. The shutdown of restaurants, bars and retail stores leaves municipalities across the board without income from sales tax. According to New York state, counties outside of New York City are projected to lose a combined \$2 billion in

revenue from sales tax this year.

“Finalists will be interviewed by an expanded board and recommendations will be submitted to the Common Council in early July,” Keeler said in a statement. “A new management contract is anticipated to be in place by late July, with significant savings to Cohoes property taxpayers.”

The review committee includes Fran Delsignore,

owner of The Vocal Studio; Michelle Schifley, senior director of University Auxiliary Services Administration at the University of Albany; and James Bouchard, city treasurer. The board is co-chaired by Ralph Pascale, owner of Spendwood School of Dance and Gymnastics, and Sal Prizio, program and event manager at Proctors Theatre.



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COMMUNITY

Sushi joint not ready to face dine-in

Shogun of Delmar not comfortable with opening indoor dining, will continue to serve customers curbside and takeout

By MICHAEL HALLISEY
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

DELMAR— As eateries across the Capital District open their doors for in-dine service, one popular Delmar restaurant has opted to keep them closed.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the OK to allow restaurants to open in-dine service as Phase 3 of his multi-phase plan to reopen the state. Restaurants were allowed to serve outdoor dining, but indoor service was not permitted until Wednesday, June 17. Elisa and Jose Arteché said they had been “inundated” with “hundreds of calls” asking when they would open Shogun of Delmar for dining again. The couple released an online statement to tell patrons they will not be opening their doors “for the immediate future.”

“After careful consideration, we will not be reopening for dine

in service at this time,” the Artechés stated. The popular sushi and saki bar will continue to serve contact-free delivery, curbside service and takeout, as it has since virus-related shutdowns began in March. But, they said, “there are still too many unknowns with COVID-19,” to reopen.

The Artechés lengthy online statement repeatedly thanked patrons for service, and urged those to continue visiting and following the rules while dining at other restaurants, but also expressed concern as they watch news coverage from other states and countries.

“We have been keeping track of what’s happening in other states and countries that reopened already and we are concerned about the possibility of another surge,” the Artechés said. “Frankly we want to be proven wrong. It would be amazing if New York state does not go through a

second wave.”

New York state had long stood on top of the list of COVID-19 cases in the United States. At one point, the number of cases in the Empire State ranked within the top six countries in the world. According to John Hopkins University & Medicine, New York peaked at more than 11,000 cases a day in early April. That same figure is now down to 606 as of Tuesday, June 16.

However, while New York cases continue to trend downwards, other places in the country are climbing up. Arizona has climbed from approximately 670 cases to 1744 cases a day, from June 1 to June 16. Within that same time window, Florida has spiked from 674 to 2,384 cases a day and Texas has doubled its figures from 1,545 to 3,059. Alabama, Louisiana and South Carolina are also trending up. These states have



Shogun of Delmar

practiced relatively relaxed social distancing compared with New York. The shutdowns mandated from Albany, however, caused the hospitality industry to lose billions in income.

“Please understand that while the law does not mandate all restaurants to open, for many hospitality businesses, phase 3 is not optional,” said the Artechés.

The Artechés said the relative small size of their restaurant’s dining room

factored into their decision. Opening the restaurant with reduced capacity would not carry much more of an advantage than the curbside service it already provides.

The Artechés said the shutdown has allowed them the “bright side” of time to reflect on the past.

They had purchased Shogun of Delmar from entrepreneur Frank Lee, who started the restaurant more than 10 years ago. He

continues to own the sister Shogun location and Rain Modern Chinese in Albany. They now plan to reimagine their restaurant with plans to renovate the interior, redesigning the menu and reevaluating their service goals.

“Thank you to everyone that is willing and able to support dine-in service at all locally owned restaurants,” the Artechés said. “Small business is truly at the heart of the community.”

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CLUES ACROSS

- Protects from weather
- Superhigh frequency
- Southern constellation
- Swines
- Self-righteously moralistic person
- United Arab Emirates city
- Surinam toad
- Sign language
- Tattoo (slang)
- Makes level
- Sun up in New York
- It must be scratched
- Where people live
- Swiss river
- Buddy
- One of two equal parts of a divisible whole
- Shrek is one
- Egyptian unit of weight
- Fiddler crabs
- Carroll O'Connor's TV wife
- No longer having life
- Former OSS
- A way to emit sound
- Mandela's party
- Adult female chicken
- U. of Miami's mascot
- Southeastern Chinese people
- Casino game
- Amos Alonzo __, US football coach
- Joint connecting two pipes at right angles
- Will Ferrell film
- River in NE Scotland

CLUES DOWN

- Occur
- Show up
- Capital of Taiwan
- Former French coin
- Some are bad
- Monetary unit
- Package (abbr.)
- Indian religious person
- Crew
- Antidiuretic hormone
- Makeshift
- Baseball box score stat
- Make a mistake
- Not moving
- Even distribution of weight
- Clumsy person
- Paddle
- Worked the soil
- Alias
- Plant cultivated in Peru
- Side-blotched lizards genus
- Wild dog
- Immoral act
- Pound
- Manning and Lilly are two
- Put on the shelf for now
- Baltimore ballplayer
- Cuddle
- Dashes
- Related on the mother's side
- Witch
- Kilogram force (abbr.)

Answers on Pg. B17

COMMUNITY

Troy eatery shuttered on grand opening



Vic Christopher hires E. Stewart Jones after Troy officials shut down his new Donna's Italian restaurant on night of its grand opening

By MICHAEL HALLISEY
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

TROY — Vic Christopher, the Collar City's vocal restaurateur, was prepared to open his newly-branded restaurant last week before City Hall placed an all stop on his plans.

Christopher, who owns several popular eateries from inside The Clark House at 207 Broadway, was set to open the doors for the grand opening of Donna's Italian and American Restaurant on Thursday, June 18. The new restaurant was to take the place of Peck's Arcade.

Christopher said the closure came without warning and after he had invited city code officials and the new fire chief to inspect the four-story historic building. The Clark House is also home to Little Pecks, The Grocery and a second-story cocktail bar named The Tavern, which was already closed.

The upper floors were under renovation with plans to re-open as socially distanced dining rooms sometime in the future.

Last month, Christopher shared with The Spot 518 his plans of a newly-envisioned eating experience adapted to expectations of safe social distancing to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. The restaurateur said he had sought and received approval from Troy before starting the renovation project. But, by Thursday evening, city officials placed a notice ordering the immediate closure of the entire building.

"I called the mayor multiple times," Christopher said at a press conference from in front of his restaurant. "I said, 'Mayor, you've been a customer here. I appreciate your support throughout the years, [but] you are making a mistake. This is

wrong."

City officials expressed concern with an incomplete staircase on the building's first floor and cited the building as unsafe under the city's code ordinance. Christopher said he was willing to close the staircase and close the Grocery to remain open for service. He ultimately asked if he could limit visitors to outside service, so long as he could maintain access to the kitchen.

The ordinance cited by the city appears to require the building to be closed outright until the issue is repaired. Lucas Confectionery, the adjacent wine bar at 12 Second St., remains open but without access to a kitchen.

Christopher's hospitality business has helped revive Troy's downtown life. He's also been a visible proponent for other businesses. In the past several years, he was among the strongest supporters

to usher in peer-to-peer ridesharing company Uber. He was also the loudest voice in support of a failed bid to bring a Bow Tie Cinema complex to fill the void left at the city's Monument Square. Thursday, he expressed how the closure puts his business under a hardship that will cost him "thousands of dollars." Christopher is now represented by E. Stewart Jones of Jones Hacker Murphy.

"To do this to a restaurant now, after all we've been through, just isn't right. We'll do what it takes to comply with code but we can't afford to be shut down now," Christopher said. "We just brought back seven staff members off of unemployment. We've been training our staff for weeks for our opening today. We've purchased thousands of dollars of food."


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■ COMMUNITY

Friday nights call for Armenian food

Annual Armenian Festival goes from two-day fest to serial weekend event

By **MICHAEL HALLISEY**
halliseym@spotlightnews.com

WATERVLIET — The Armenian Festival has long been an anticipated event for the community to get a taste of authentic food while enjoying games and dances in the summer heat.

The annual festival started as St. Peter Armenian Church's picnic in 1910, originally held in Green Island. It later moved to Troy before expanding from a modest picnic to a grandiose festival at St. Peter Armenian Church in Watervliet.

But, the coronavirus pandemic has all but shuttered the festival. The church, however, is still serving the authentic food through a curbside service at the end of each week.

"We're resilient people. We've gone through many, many things; like other communities. . . . I would say that because of our past, and because of our spiritual leaders being so positive, we came up with a creative way to make everyone happy."

— Rafi Topalian,
St. Peter
Armenian Church



And, despite the virus-related shutdowns, people are still making their way up the hill for the food.

Rafi Topalian, a deacon at the church, said spirits have been "very high" despite the church not being allowed to host the usual festivities. He credited Rev. Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian for instilling a positive, "this too shall pass" attitude among parishioners.

"We're resilient people," said Topalian. "We've gone through many, many things; like other communities. . . . I would say that because of our past, and because of our spiritual leaders being so positive, we came up with a creative way to make everyone happy."

For the past several Fridays, the church has provided curbside food service through its Flavors of Armenia program for June. Every Friday, from 5

to 7 p.m., visitors are rolling into the church parking lot in orderly fashion to pick up their online orders of authentic Armenian food.

Topalian is arguably one of the more visible members of the church. Most of the public will recognize him at baseball games and sporting events as the "Singing Jeweler," a tip of the hat to his passion for singing and his vocation as owner of Top Custom Jewelers in Latham.

"This way, they're still being safe, following the mandates, raising revenue [for the church], and thumbing their noses at the pandemic," said Topalian.

A menu is available through the church's website at <https://stpeterarmenianchurch.com/flavors/>. From there, visitors can place their orders and pick the food up later from the church. Of the popular items on the menu, Topalian said The Hye Burger is a local favorite. According to the menu, it's a "huge" half-pound patty of beef and lamb, combined with authentic spices, served on a freshly baked hard roll and topped with an Armenian Slaw and a serving of Pilaf.

"It's like Greek food, only better," Topalian jokingly said with a laugh.

For more information, contact the St. Peter Armenian Church office at stpeter.armch@prodigy.net or (518) 274-3673.

HOROSCOPES

June 2020
Week 4

ARIES – MAR 21/APR 20

Aries, news from loved ones may catch you off guard, but could nevertheless make you feel excited this week. This is a sign from the universe that some part of life will change.

TAURUS – APR 21/MAY 21

This week you may feel like opening your heart to others, Taurus. Show a close friend that you care about him or her, or really further your connection with a romantic partner.

GEMINI – MAY 22/JUN 21

A busy work schedule may be making things seem more hectic than usual, Gemini. It's easy to become overwhelmed if you do not find strategies to calm your mind each day.

CANCER – JUN 22/JUL 22

Powerful feelings of affection may build up in you this week, Cancer. You may be taking inventory of how you feel about loved ones. Share grand gestures and loving words.

LEO – JUL 23/AUG 23

You may get encouragement from an unlikely source this week, Leo. This can inspire you to conduct an in-depth exploration of long-term goals. Embark on a new journey.

VIRGO – AUG 24/SEPT 22

It is alright to feel shy or inhibited this week, Virgo. Uncertainty over long-term plans could be driving these emotions. Once you get your thoughts on paper, you can proceed.

LIBRA – SEPT 23/OCT 23

A desire to add life to your routine could motivate you to find new activities to explore this week, Libra. Infuse your daily schedule with doses of creativity.

SCORPIO – OCT 24/NOV 22

Scorpio, this week you may feel sentimental and nostalgic. Perhaps you will reminisce about your childhood by looking over old photographs or playing family movies.

SAGITTARIUS – NOV 23/DEC 21

Sagittarius, you feel content with yourself and life this week and that is great. An ability to look within with a practice like meditation may contribute to this serene state of mind.

CAPRICORN – DEC 22/JAN 20

Figuring out how to resolve issues in a relationship may leave you feeling somewhat unsettled, Capricorn. It might be that you do not want to approach sensitive topics.

AQUARIUS – JAN 21/FEB 18

Excitement about business or work goals might make you feel like taking some dynamic action to promote your ideas to higher ups, Aquarius. You may find a receptive audience.

PISCES – FEB 19/MAR 20

Try collaborating on a fun project this week, Pisces. Check to see if anyone needs assistance if you don't have your own project in mind.

Summer Home Improvement Pages

- STYLISH DESIGNS • INNOVATIVE IDEAS
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Key to keeping cool is AC maintenance

Few things beat summer heat better than walking into a comfortably chilled air conditioned home. Air conditioning is often taken for granted, but sorely missed when it is not working. The key to keeping cool all summer long is to ensure that air conditioning systems are functioning properly.

Maintaining an AC unit can save money and protect homeowners' investments. Without regular attention, an AC unit will lose its efficiency, needlessly wasting both energy and money as a result. Poor maintenance also can lead to system failure just when it is needed most. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average lifespan of an air conditioning unit is about 15 to 20 years. Home Advisor says homeowners can pay between \$500 and \$4,000 for central air conditioning, with the final cost depending on the unit, additional installation items, such as ductwork, and installation charges.



With regular maintenance, homeowners can keep their units humming properly and avoid premature replacement costs.

So what can homeowners expect as it pertains to air conditioner maintenance? The following are some oft-needed checks and fixes.

- **Keep it clean.** Vacuum the fins and coils of the AC unit on the external

compressor/condenser fan with a soft-bristled brush, advise the experts at Family Handyman. This may require unscrewing the metal box surrounding the unit to access the fins. Remove any accumulated debris that may be impeding air flow. Afterward, go inside and change the filter that is installed with the evaporator that's located in a central duct near the furnace. Inspect the filter periodically to see if it is soiled and needs replacement. Timing can vary depending various factors, such as the time of year, the accumulation of dust and whether or not pets live in the home.

- **Straighten coil fins.** The fins on the condenser are easily bent and that can affect the flow of air through the coils. If you cannot easily straighten them, then consult with an HVAC professional to do so.

- **Check the thermostat.** Ensure that the thermostat is still working properly.

You also may want to upgrade an old thermostat to a programmable or smart thermostat that enables you to remotely set and adjust the temperature.

- **Consider an in-line duct booster.** HVAC professionals can guide you through the advantages of an in-line duct booster for forced-air cooling. This can increase the flow of cool air into a room that always seems hotter than the rest. Another option is a vent or register booster fan that sits on top or replaces a traditional floor or wall register.

- **Deal with condensation.** Condensation from air conditioning coils can puddle around the furnace if the condensate drain tube is clogged. Clearing it out will help prevent puddling and the formation of bacteria-laden water in the system.

Periodic maintenance is necessary to ensure uninterrupted service on a home AC unit.

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How to conserve water as the mercury rises

Conserving natural resources is often so simple that people make some adjustments without affecting their daily lives at all. But sometimes it's not so easy to conserve.

Summer is one time of year when conservation efforts tend to require

more sacrifice than normal. Even the most devoted conservationist may find it difficult to conserve water during the dog days of summer, when drought and soaring temperatures make it difficult to maintain lawns and gardens. Thankfully, there are ways to help lawns and gardens withstand summer's dog

days without wasting water.

• **Water wisely.** Watering lawns and gardens in the early morning hours is a savvy move for various reasons. Heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke and heat exhaustion pose a serious threat to people of all ages, and the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention recommends cooling off in air conditioned places as temperatures climb. By watering their lawns and gardens early in the morning, homeowners are ensuring they won't be outside watering during those times of day when their risk for heat stroke and heat exhaustion is at its peak. In

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Did you know?

Oxygen is essential for the roots of grass to breathe and grow strong enough to support healthy lawns. But according to the Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, compacted soil can produce a decrease in oxygen content that can make it hard for roots to thrive. Soil compaction can result from a number of activities, including walking on grass or driving or parking vehicles on grass. When soil is compacted, it breaks into small particles that reduce the amount of pore space in the soil. That makes it hard for water, oxygen and nutrients to get through, threatening the strength of the roots and putting the grass in jeopardy. Aerating a lawn can help homeowners foster strong root growth and healthy grass. When to aerate may be contingent upon local climate, so homeowners who suspect the soil in their yards is compact should consult with a local landscaping professional to determine the best time to aerate their lawns.

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Summer Home Improvement Pages

addition, watering in the early morning when the sun has not yet reached its peak decreases the amount of water that will be lost to evaporation, thereby increasing the amount of water that will make it into water-needy lawns and gardens.

• **Shower at the beach.** Beach enthusiasts can conserve water and save money on their water bills by taking quick showers at the beach to

wash the sand off. A cold shower can be the perfect remedy after a long day of soaking up some sun at the beach. And because beach showers use cold water, beachgoers are less likely to take luxurious, potentially wasteful showers than they might at home.

• **Take nights off from doing dishes.** Hand-washing dishes may seem like a more effective way to conserve water than using a dishwasher, but that's

not the case. The National Resources Defense Council notes that hand-washing dishes can consume as many as 27 gallons of water, while Energy Star®-rated dishwashers consume just three gallons of water. Before running the dishwasher, make sure it's full.

• **Cover your pool.** Keeping pools covered during the dog days of summer reduces the likelihood that pool water will be lost to evaporation. In fact, the

GRACE Communications Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating sustainable food systems, notes that uncovered pools can lose as much as 1,000 gallons of water to evaporation each month.

Conserving water during the dog days of summer may require some sacrifice. But such sacrifices are easier than many people may expect.

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5 outdoor projects that add value to your home

Exterior renovations can enhance the appearance of a property and make it more enjoyable for homeowners. Certain renovations have the potential to add value to a home, while others may do the opposite. Learning which one have the largest return on investment can help homeowners select features that will have the most positive impact.

Curb appeal goes a long way toward attracting potential buyers. According to the National Association of Realtors, first impressions of a property have a strong influence on buyers. Landscaping and external features



can do much to influence such impressions. .

- **Lawn care program:** Investing in a lawn care program that consists of fertilizer and weed control application and can be transferred over to a subsequent home owner is an attractive feature. NAR says such a care program can recover \$1,000 in value of the \$330 average cost, or a 303 percent ROI.

- **Low-maintenance lifestyle:** When choosing materials for projects, those that offer low-maintenance benefits can be preferential. These include low-maintenance patio materials, composite decking, vinyl fencing, and inorganic mulched beds.

- **Fire pit:** A fire pit can be used for much of the year. In the spring and summer, the firepit is a great place to congregate to roast marshmallows or sip wine and gaze into the fire. In the fall, the fire pit can make for a cozy retreat. A fire pit that has a gas burner is low-maintenance, and the National Association of Landscape Professionals says that most can recoup about \$4,000 of their \$6,000

average price tag.

- **Softscaping:** Hardscaping refers to structures like outdoor kitchens or decks. Softscaping involves the living elements of the landscape. Hiring a landscape designer to install trees, shrubs, natural edging, and rock elements can do wonders toward improving the look and value of a home.

- **Pool or water feature:** In certain markets, particularly hot climates, a pool or another water feature is a must-have. However, in other areas where outdoor time is limited, a pool or water feature can actually lower the value of a home. Speaking with a real estate professional can give homeowners an idea of how a pool will fare in a given neighborhood.

Outdoor improvements can improve the marketability of a home, as well as enhance its appearance and function.

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Summer Home Improvement Pages

Creating your own luxurious backyard oasis

Our backyards are some of the best places to spend the summer months, especially if you're practicing social distancing and are tired of being cooped up indoors. Fortunately, it's possible to transform your outdoor living space into a secluded, open-air retreat.

Bring the indoors out. We often hear about bringing the outdoors inside, but the reverse is also true when designing a luxurious extension of your home. Homey, lived-in touches can take your outdoor space from sterile and unfinished to cozy and inviting. Think patterned throw pillows, fluffy blankets for chilly evenings, outdoor rugs, colorful lanterns, and decorative accessories like painted terracotta pots or metal tins.

Invest in comfy furniture. What's the best part of your living or family room? Chances are it's your comfortable couch or recliner. To

recreate the same feeling, splurge on some soft furniture that will make you want to stay outside for hours reading a book or working remotely. It doesn't have to break the bank either — you can DIY a cozy lounging bench with reclaimed wood and hand-sewn cushions with outdoor stuffing and fabric.

Add a relaxing pool or spa. Water has a calming effect and is often linked to our favorite memories at the cottage or on vacation. A pool or spa can help transport you somewhere far away without leaving your home. A pool can help you and the kids get some exercise while



accommodate any design, making them a very versatile and efficient way to build pools.

Go wild with greenery. Live plants can help you feel connected with nature, and tending to them can help you feel relaxed yet productive during isolation. A vertical garden can add visual interest, while trees and shrubs can provide shade and character. Aromatic herbs like lavender or rosemary

offer pleasant scents and can spice up your cooking. And don't be afraid to cut some flowers from your garden to place in vases or pots for beautiful finishing touches.

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swimming laps, while a spa can soothe tired muscles after a long day hunched over your laptop. To reduce energy costs and increase longevity, consider using Nudura insulated concrete forms, which provide superior insulation. ICF pools also can be custom-made to

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Did you know?

Many an amateur landscaper has encountered grubs while tending to their lawns, but even the most attentive green thumb may have a lawn infested with grubs and not know it. According to the pest and weed experts at Roundup®, grubs often go unnoticed until late summer, when they've already done substantial damage to a lawn. Oddly enough, one of the telltale signs of a grub infestation is not the grubs themselves but the animals looking to dine on them. Fully grown grubs make for hearty meals, so homeowners who notice raccoons, skunks, armadillos, and/or birds digging up their lawns may have a grub infestation. That's because these unwanted guests like to dine on mature grubs who have spent summer feasting on organic matter in the soil. Another sign of a possible grub infestation is a lawn that feels spongy when stepped on. Patches of dead grass that peel back easily are a sign that grubs have eaten the roots that keep healthy grass in place.

COMMUNITY

Tik Tok crushes and toilet paper runs

Share quarantine memories for regional archive

BETHLEHEM — Our community is experiencing a historic moment of the 21st century.

Although many may be eager to put the coronavirus pandemic behind us, we have a unique opportunity to share recent memories, express our voices and listen to one another. It won't be long before a new generation will ask, "What was living through the pandemic like?"

Bethlehem Public Library is collecting recent memories of life during quarantine. Community members are encouraged to submit their thoughts, along with images, video or audio clips, including interviews with others.

We are looking for personal experiences and any details that are



meaningful, even if it's just one incident. ("Everything still seemed normal to me until I went down the paper goods aisle in the grocery store, and all the shelves were empty.") Our focus is not on the global situation but on ordinary life so that we can create a regional archive of experiences.

Narratives and images may be e-mailed to

quarantinememories@bethpl.org. Those submitting their memories and any attachments grant unrestricted use to Bethlehem Public Library. Contact information will not be made public. Submissions can also be made through the library's website at www.bethlehempubliibrary.org/quarantine-memories-

archive.

Bethlehem Public Library is located at 451 Delaware Avenue in Delmar. Call (518) 439-9314 or visit www.bethlehempubliibrary.org for more information. The library is temporarily closed to the public, but curbside pickup is available Monday-Friday, from 2 to 6 p.m.

Below are some questions to get people thinking about their quarantine memories:

- How did the look of your neighborhood change, especially at different times of day?
- What was the impact on events that you had already planned for (weddings, proms, birthdays, graduations, church/temple/mosque events, family reunions, etc.)?
- How did your routines change? What was the first thing you thought of every morning?
- How did you keep in touch with people you normally saw on a regular basis?
- Did you lose touch with anyone as a result of quarantine?
- Or did you reconnect with someone you had previously lost touch with?
- If you worked from home, what were the negative aspects? Were there any positives?
- Did you get to know your neighbors better?
- Did you witness an unusual act of kindness?
- How easy/difficult was it to manage emotions, and anxiety?
- Did you spend more time thinking about the past?

There's no place like home  to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Social distancing is the most effective tool we have for slowing the spread of the coronavirus. And that means staying home, if you can.

Work from home. Play at home. Stay at home. If you must go out, keep your social distance—six feet, or two arm-lengths apart. Young. Elderly. In between. It's going to take every one of us. If home really is where the heart is, listen to yours and do the life-saving thing.

Visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for the latest tips and information from the CDC.

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This take on muffins pairs blueberries with whole grains and chips for a go-to breakfast or any-time-of-day snack. Enjoy "Blueberry Bran Chocolate Chip Muffins" from "The Brain Boosting Diet" (Whitecap) by Norene Gilletz and Edward Wein, PhD. This make-ahead batter yields a big batch, but leftover batter can be refrigerated up to three weeks, so feel free to bake up as many or as few muffins as you'd like.

Blueberry Bran Chocolate Chip Muffins

Ingredients: Makes 30 muffins

- 3 cups all-bran cereal
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 cup hot tea
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice + enough milk (skim or 1%) to equal 2 cups
- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar

- 1/2 cup molasses or honey
- 2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup chocolate chips (semisweet or sugar-free)

Instructions

1. In a very large mixing bowl, combine bran with oil and yogurt. Pour hot tea over the mixture and let stand for 5 minutes. Stir well.
2. Add eggs, milk mixture, brown sugar, and molasses. Stir until combined.
3. Add flour, cinnamon, baking soda, and baking powder. Mix until blended.
4. Stir in orange zest, blueberries, and chocolate chips, jut until combined.
5. Either let batter stand for 30 minutes, until thickened, or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 weeks.
6. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray compartments of a muffin pan (or muffin pans) with nonstick spray.
7. Scoop batter into the muffin pan(s), filling each compartment about two-thirds full.
8. Bake 22 to 25 minutes, or until tops spring back when lightly touched.

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Guiding kids through the new normal



Helping children navigate social distancing

Children may be more deeply affected by social distancing than any other group of people. In a matter of weeks, millions of young children and adolescents went from attending school in the classroom

to being told they had to work exclusively from home. At the same time, children also were asked to give up their sports teams, clubs, meetings, and play dates. Older children may understand the how and why of social distancing, but no matter

their ages, kids may be left emotionally adrift as social distancing guidelines stay in place.

No one is certain about what the long-term effects of social distancing will be on both children and adults. Amy Learmonth, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist

at the Cognition, Memory and Development Lab at William Paterson University in New Jersey, notes that early social development takes place mostly within the family. As children age, their peer group becomes the more important hub of social development. The longer social distancing restrictions are in place, the more these developments may adversely affect youngsters.

Parents can take steps to help kids cope during these uncertain times.

- Set up digital play dates. The connectivity of the internet enables people to keep in touch even if they cannot be together physically. Encourage children to engage their friends via online chats, ideally ones that feature video so they can see and hear their friends. Parents of young children can reach out to one another and establish digital play dates

via FaceTime or another virtual meeting app.

- Lighten up on screen time restrictions. Each person has a different way to cope with social distancing and pass the time. Children may spend more time on tablets, watching television or playing video games. For now, parents can be a bit more lenient and understanding about how technology can fill the void created by social distancing.

- Participate in a scavenger hunt. Join or organize a neighborhood scavenger hunt. Walk around the neighborhood looking for school mascot pictures in windows or rainbows on doors, advise the childcare experts at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. This activity can maintain a sense of connection with your community.

- Create time for

physical activity. Exercise can tame stress, improve mood and be great for the body in myriad ways. Children and teens should exercise each day. Families can exercise together to make physical activity more fun.

- Set new goals. Ask everyone to do their part to complete "to-do" lists or make a set of goals to achieve while social distancing. Checking off items on the list as they're completed can give everyone a sense of accomplishment.

Children may need a morale boost while practicing social distancing, and parents can help in various ways.

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